

Public Health Act, 1872.

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# REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1905.

BEING THE

Thirty-First Annual Report

ON THE

SANITARY CONDITION

OF THE

*Trowbridge Urban Sanitary District.*

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PRESENTED TO THE

***Trowbridge Urban District Council***

BY

**JAMES PEARSE, M.D.,**

*Medical Officer of Health of Trowbridge Urban Sanitary Authority.*

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# Medical Officer's Annual Report.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE TROWBRIDGE URBAN  
DISTRICT COUNCIL,

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit to you my fourth report as your  
Medical Officer of Health.

Population of District at Census 1901 : 11,526.

Estimated population to middle of 1905 : 11,318.

Area of district : 2,126 acres.

Number of houses erected in 1905 : 20.

## **VITAL STATISTICS,**

The births during the year numbered 246 as against 254 last year. The annual birth rate per 1,000 of the population was 21·7, the corresponding figures for last year being 22·3, and the average for the last ten years 20·7. The rate for England and Wales for the first three-quarters of the year was 27·8. There occurred nine illegitimate births.

The total number of deaths during the year was 152, giving an annual rate per 1,000 of 13·4, which is satisfactorily low. The corresponding figures for last year were 143 and 12·5. and the average for the previous ten years 160 and 13·4. The death rate continues at a satisfactorily low figure. That for England and Wales during the first three-quarters of the year was 15·3

The mortality figures for each term of years stand as follows :

under 1 year	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards
22	13	3	4	55	55

## INFANTILE MORTALITY.

The 22 deaths of children under 1 year of age produce a death rate per 1,000 births of 89.4, as against 74.7 for 1904, and an average for the last ten years of 100. As the value of preventive medicine is being more recognised, increasing attention is now bestowed on the question of infantile mortality, in view of the enormous wastage of life which thus accrues. The subject is not of such magnitude in a small urban area, as it is in the large cities where this rate may reach the figure of 200 per 1,000 births. But I am hopeful that even the figure that prevails here may be lowered as parents more clearly realise their responsibility in the matter of infant feeding and as more supervision is exercised over the milk supply. Only two deaths have occurred from gastritis and diarrhoea, usually the most prolific causes of infantile mortality. This may largely be accounted for by the relative absence of excessive heat in the summer.

It is satisfactory to note that while in 1904 Phthisis and other Tubercular Diseases accounted for 24 deaths, the number for 1905 is only 12. One may anticipate that in succeeding years this mortality will loom much less largely than it has done in the past. The Sanatorium treatment of Phthisis will educate consumptive patients not only in treatment but in the measures which will prevent their spreading the disease, and the supervision of cowsheds will prevent the use of tuberculous milk, and thus largely banish intestinal tuberculosis.

Cancer and Malignant Diseases unfortunately have been responsible for 15 deaths as against 9 in 1904,

The deaths from Bronchitis and Pneumonia number 25; those from Heart disease 21.

Thirteen inquests were held during the year.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The following tables shews the number of cases notified during 1905, compared with the figures for 1904, and the average for the last 10 years.

	1905	1904	1895—1904
Diphtheria	17	12	8.4
Membranous Croup	—	—	.5
Erysipelas	7	5	11.8
Scarlet Fever	92	40	31.5
Enteric Fever	1	5	3.5
Puerperal Fever	—	—	.9



Diphtheria continues to be somewhat more prevalent than was the case in former years in this area. This is largely accounted for by the fact that bacteriological examination is now resorted to in cases of doubtful sore throat, and cases are thus found to be diphtheritic which otherwise would not have been so considered. The County Council laboratory is in this respect of great service to the District. The cases have occurred sporadically throughout the year and have not been associated with any special district. Three occurred in one family. One was possibly contracted from a contaminated well which has since been closed. Three cases proved fatal.

The year 1904 was characterized by a moderate epidemic of Scarlet Fever. During 1905 there occurred a further extensive outbreak but mild in character. Cases occurred sporadically in the early months of the year, but began to develop an epidemic manifestation in August and this assumed a marked form in the last quarter. There were notified altogether 92 cases, occurring as follows—January 1, February 2, March 0, April 1, May 0, June 2, July 1, August 5, September 6, October 26, November 29, December 19. The first cases of the epidemic occurred in the district around The Furlong, Harford Street, and Ashton Street, and were all more or less traceable to the first two cases which were notified. The incidence of the disease then shifted to the Mortimer Street and Newtown District, and the large majority of the cases occurred in this area. The source of infection was obviously in the schools. This being so I paid frequent visits to all the schools in the area involved for the purpose of examining the children, and by this means I have been successful in finding children attending school who had recovered from mild attacks and were undoubtedly acting as carriers of infection.

On October 25th I found one child in attendance with desquamating hands and on visiting the house found an obvious history of Scarlet Fever. On October 30th I found two similar cases. On November 15th, two, on November 29th, three. The explanation of this circumstance lies in the fact that the epidemic has been of a very mild character. The rash is often evanescent, and the cases may not be of sufficient severity to lead the parents to consider it necessary to call in medical assistance. Only one case has come to my knowledge in which a parent has wittingly treated a child on her own responsibility for Scarlet Fever, but this boy was brought to me before being sent to school. In such a case the parents are liable to prosecution for non-notification of the disease,

but this procedure was not deemed advisable, and I was instructed by the Sanitary Committee to issue a poster warning parents of the danger they incurred by concealing infectious disease.

On the first December as the majority of cases arose in connection with the Newtown British School, I deemed it necessary to advise its closure. This was followed by a considerable reduction in the number of notifications and by the end of the year the epidemic had largely subsided.

The mildness of the outbreak is shewn by the fact that no death took place, and by the marked absence in the patients attacked of the complications apt to be associated with Scarlet Fever.

Three of the children affected had had a previous attack of the disease.

There has occurred only one case of Enteric Fever, for which no local cause could be ascertained.

There has been no occurrence of Puerperal Fever.

Measles was very prevalent in May and June and necessitated the closure of the infant schools of the town.

In June cases of Small Pox occurred in the Common Lodging House in Salisbury, and being advised of the possibility of contacts passing in this direction I paid for some time daily visits to the Lodging House in Shails Lane for the purpose of examining the inmates. Fortunately no cases developed, and in view of the unvaccinated state of the community I hope we may be spared an outbreak of this disease, the nature and severity of which the public have by long immunity forgotten.

The accommodation at the Isolation Hospital in Silver Street Lane was severely taxed by the outbreak of Scarlet Fever, and it was found impossible to remove a number of cases with limited home accommodation. The duties at this hospital were well performed by Nurse Dexter, additional help being granted her when necessary.

The new Joint Isolation Hospital in Bradley Road was opened in November. It affords much needed accommodation for diseases other than Scarlet Fever, and increased accommodation for this disease. It is a matter for congratulation that such a well equipped hospital is available within the district.



In all 49 patients were removed to Hospital during the year.

### **WATER SUPPLY.**

The Company's supply has been well maintained throughout the year and has given rise to no cause for complaint. Two wells, one in Brickplatt, and one in Salter's Yard, The Parade, were closed as unfit for drinking purposes. Nine houses have during the year been supplied with the Company's water.

### **SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.**

There are 12 of these on the Register. Most of them are of long standing and situated close to inhabited property, an unsatisfactory feature and one necessitating frequent supervision. The Inspector has exercised this and I have visited them once a quarter. One new slaughter-house has been licensed for Messrs. Sainsbury, and is well equipped. Suggested improvements have been made in some, in others there is room for improvement.

### **THE COMMON LODGING HOUSE**

in Shails' Lane has been frequently visited by the Inspector, and from time to time by myself. The licensee maintains it in a satisfactory manner.

### **HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ACT.**

Two houses have been closed during the year as unfit for occupation.

234 House to House inspections have been made.

### **NUISANCES.**

A large number of sundry nuisances have been dealt with during the year. Details of these are given in the Sanitary Inspector's Summary.

The question of the revision of the nuisance byelaws has been before the Sanitary Committee, and I hope it may be possible to deal with this matter during the ensuing year.

Eight cases of overcrowding have been dealt with during the year.

## NUISANCE FROM GAS PLANT.

Two special reports on this subject were presented by me in February and March. In the month of January a plant for producing gas for motive purposes was erected in connection with one of the factories in the town. Shortly afterwards there occurred serious cases of poisoning in houses in the vicinity and among the workpeople. On the matter being enquired into, there was discovered a serious leakage in one of the pipes. This being remedied, the worst aspect of the nuisance was abated. But though no fresh cases of actual poisoning developed serious complaints continued to be made by residents in the neighbourhood. These arose from the escape of poisonous gases from the vent pipe and their diffusion through the air. By burning the gas off as it escaped, this nuisance was much mitigated, but continued to a less extent at certain periods of the day. The explanation given of this was, that until the plant has got well under weigh the first gas which escapes is non-inflammable. If this is correct, it appears that a degree of nuisance is inseparable from such an installation. Ultimately the use of the plant was discontinued. Now the factory has been removed to another site, where I understand the gas will escape into a high chimney, and as the neighbourhood is less populous, I trust there may be no appreciable nuisance.

## SEWERAGE.

Your Surveyor and the Engineer to the Sewage Disposal Works have kindly supplied me with the following summary of work accomplished in their departments during the year.

### NORTHERN SEWERAGE SCHEME.

"The main Sewers in Marsh Road, Wyke Road, Victoria Road Hilperton Road and Cemetery Road are completed, and a number of House connections made thereto. The Sewer in Canal Road is not at present completed owing to Grant of Easement through private land not yet being settled. This length will however be complete early this year. The Northern Outfall Sewer is completed with the exception of coupling up.

### MAIN INTERCEPTING SEWER.

This Sewer will be completed when the Outfall Works are ready to receive the Town Sewage.



### BRADLEY ROAD SEWER.

This new Sewer is completed."

### TROWBRIDGE SEWAGE DISPOSAL WORKS.

"The constructional part of these works are now practically completed, the most important work remaining being the filling of the Primary and Secondary Beds. Four of the latter are already filled with clinker, and work to the others is being pushed forward as fast as the Railway siding accommodation allows of the material being brought in.

The Gas Generating Plant, Engines and Pumps are being fixed, and your Engineer hopes to have a portion of the works in operation next April."

### DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, AND MILKSHOPS.

Much gratifying work has been accomplished in this department during the year. Frequent visits have been made to the various cowsheds by the Inspector and considerable improvement has been effected in their condition. Hitherto the obligations of the Dairies and Cowsheds Order have not been carried out, and the condition of the sheds and yards has been such that it has been impossible to expect purity of the milk supply. Two special reports have been presented to the Sanitary Committee on this subject. The first shewed a very unsatisfactory state as regards cleanliness and drainage, some of the sheds and yards being entirely undrained, others inefficiently so. The Inspector was thereupon instructed to write to the owners of the properties involved, requiring them to conform to the regulations, and to see that limewashing and general cleanliness were more efficiently performed. The second report shewed that in several sheds complete drainage had been effected, and considerable improvements effected in the condition of the flooring, etc. Limewashing has been regularly carried out, and in some of the cases there is less accumulation of manure in the yards than used formerly to be the cases.

On my last visit I noticed a very marked improvement from the time of my former report on this subject. Some of the sheds were in a very satisfactory condition and one could wish that the carefulness of these occupiers could be emulated by others who do not yet realise the need of safeguarding the milk supply from contamination. Five owners have not yet given attention to your requirements as to the condition of their sheds.

The importance of this subject in the interests of Public Health is being increasingly realised. In the early part of the year a County Council Conference was held between Dairy Farmers and representatives of District Councils, at which a resolution was passed calling upon all authorities to strictly enforce the regulations within their areas. At the Annual Conference of the Federation of Dairymen and Cowkeepers' Association in September a motion was passed declaring it advisable "That no milk should be sold from any farm or cowshed until a certificate has been obtained that the premises are in a sanitary condition and the Cows healthy."

### UN SOUND FOOD.

It has been possible to devote more attention to this subject during the past year. In 24 cases unsound meat was destroyed with the consent of the owners. In 5 cases the seizure was effected under a magistrate's order. The main interest in this matter in your area lies in the question of the prevalence of tuberculosis in swine, and its effects on the bacon industry.

### THE FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT

Has again involved much work. In all 166 inspections have been made, and 31 defects have been remedied. These are constituted as follows : Want of cleanliness 12, overcrowding 1, faulty sanitary accommodation 11, breach of bakehouse regulations 1, other nuisances 6.

### RAINFALL.

Mr. Rodway has kindly favoured me with the following records taken at Adcroft throughout the year. The corresponding figures for 1904 are contrasted.

			1905.	1904.
January	-	-	·2	3·13
February	-	-	·64	2·60
March	-	-	3·81	3·78
April	-	-	1·98	2·34
May	-	-	·4	3·17
June	-	-	2·76	2·99
July	-	-	1·34	1·13
August	-	-	4·68	5·45
September	-	-	1·27	2·68
October	-	-	1·15	6·70
November	-	-	2·93	1·95
December	-	-	·93	3·27
Total			22·09	39·2
			Inches	

The duties of the Sanitary Inspector's department have been very efficiently discharged by Mr. Strickland. The amount of work required is very considerable as will be seen from the details which are appended, and much is also accomplished by personal interviews which does not thus appear. This work is not always easy of accomplishment, but I trust you will find the record of the year a satisfactory one.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JAMES PEARSE, M.D.

Trowbridge, February, 1906.



SANITARY INSPECTOR'S OFFICE,  
MARKET HOUSE CHAMBERS,  
TROWBRIDGE, 25-1-06

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE  
TROWBRIDGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit to you a Summary of the work done in any Department, during the twelve months ending the 31st December, 1905.

**Summary of Work Done.**

**INSPECTIONS :—**

HOUSES :				No.
(a)	House to House Inspections	..	234	} 403
(b)	Houses inspected due to Infectious Disease	..	82	
(c)	Other Houses Inspected	..	87	
	Slaughter-houses	..	..	114
	Lodging-house	..	..	15
	Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops	..	..	125
	Workshops and Factories	..	..	166
	Stables	..	..	24
	Pigstyes	..	..	7
	Poultry Pens	..	..	6
	Fried Fish Shop	..	..	6
	Petroleum Stores	..	..	40
	Miscellaneous	..	..	51
				Total 957

**VISITS :—**

<i>Re</i> -Abatement of Nuisances	..	..	431
Other Visits	..	..	111
			Total 542

Zymotic enquiries into cases of Infectious Diseases	101
Rooms disinfected after Infectious Disease	55
Patients removed to Hospital	49
Bedding disinfected (lots)	50
Total Number of Nuisances and contraventions of the Public Health Acts, Byelaws, Cowsheds and Dairies Orders and Regulations, etc., recorded	424

Number of samples of water taken for analysis	3
Number of wells closed .. ..	2
Number of wells discontinued to be used for drinking purposes or washing milk vessels ..	2
Number of seizures of unsound foodstuffs ..	5
Number of lots of foodstuffs destroyed with consent of owners .. ..	24

NUMBER ON THE VARIOUS REGISTERS:—

1. Slaughter-houses .. ..	12
2. Lodging-houses .. ..	1
3. Workshops .. ..	116
4. Cowsheds and Dairies and Milkshops	
Cowkeepers .. ..	20
Cowkeepers and Purveyors of Milk ..	1
Cowkeepers, Dairymen and Purveyors of Milk	1
Dairymen and Purveyors of Milk ..	3
Purveyors of Milk .. ..	13
5. Petroleum .. ..	8
6. Calcuim Carbide .. ..	3

NUISANCES *re* HOUSE INSPECTIONS:—

Defective drains .. ..	71
Choked drains .. ..	6
Defective drain traps .. ..	105
Defective W.C's. .. ..	44
Insufficient W.C. accommodation .. ..	2
Insufficient flushing to W.C.s .. ..	10
Insufficient ventilation to W.C.s .. ..	20
Defective flushing cistern to W.C.s .. ..	1
Insufficient flushing to urinal .. ..	1
Insufficient water supply .. ..	3
Polluted water supply .. ..	6
Overcrowding .. ..	8
Dilapidations .. ..	11
Insanitary cesspools .. ..	3
Defective rain gutters .. ..	3
Want of limewashing .. ..	22
Defective ventilating shafts .. ..	2
Improper waste pipe connections .. ..	3
Defective soilpipes .. ..	2
Conversion of workshop into dwelling .. ..	1
Insanitary yards .. ..	2
Nuisance from van dwellers .. ..	1

Total 327

Besides the above 17 new water closets have been provided.

**NUISANCES *re* WORKSHOP INSPECTIONS:—**

Want of limewashing .. ..	13
Separate W.C. accommodation for sexes ..	2
Offensive urinal .. ..	1
Defective flushing cisterns to W.C.s ..	3
Choked W.C.s .. ..	2
Defective W.C.s .. ..	3
Choked drain .. ..	1
Defective drain traps .. ..	2
Overcrowding .. ..	1
Defective roof .. ..	1
Insanitary yard .. ..	1
Nuisance from water gas plant .. ..	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

**MISCELLANEOUS NUISANCES:—**

Accumulation of dung .. ..	11
Accumulation of offensive matter .. ..	2
Insanitary dung pounds .. ..	5
Defective stable floor .. ..	1
Insufficient drainage to pigstye .. ..	2
Nuisance from fried fish shop .. ..	1
Insufficient drainage to fish shop .. ..	1
Foul ditch .. ..	1
Poultry kept so as to be a nuisance .. ..	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

**CONTRAVENTIONS OF COWSHEDS AND DAIRIES ORDERS AND REGULATIONS.****I COWSHEDS:—**

No.	Work done by owners and occupiers
13	All limewashed
8	{ 4 paved and drained 1 partly paved and drained
6	{ 1 paved and drained 1 repaired 2 closed
1	Company's water laid on
2	Nothing done

**Total 30 |**



2. PREMISES OF PURVEYORS OF MILK.	No.	Work done by owners and occupiers
Want of cleanliness and limewashing	2	Cleaned and limewashed
Defective drains and traps	5	All made sound
Total	<u>7</u>	

During the past year I submitted to you two special reports on the condition of Cowsheds, and in accordance with your instructions I requested the owners and occupiers to put their Cowsheds in proper Sanitary condition and to conform to the Cowsheds and Dairies Orders Regulations. Five of the owners have not as yet complied.

A great amount of work has been done on verbal notices only, and where possible this method has been adopted.

In all, 284 notices have been given, and the number outstanding is 12.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

WILLIAM STRICKLAND, A.R. San. Inst.

# CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATHS DURING YEAR 1905.

## TROWBRIDGE URBAN DISTRICT.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Deaths in Whole District at Subjoined Ages.							1904.
	All Ages.	Under 1 Year.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.	All Ages.
Measles ... ..	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..
Scarlet Fever ... ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Whooping Cough ... ..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	1
Diphtheria and Membranous Croup	3	..	2	1	..	..	..	4
Croup ... ..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteric Fever ... ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Epidemic Influenza ... ..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..
Diarrhoea ... ..	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	5
Enteritis ... ..	2	1	..	..	..	..	1	1
Erysipelas ... ..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
Other Septic Diseases ... ..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis) ...	7	..	..	..	..	7	..	15
Other Tubercular Diseases ... ..	5	2	1	..	1	1	..	9
Cancer, Malignant Disease ... ..	15	..	..	..	..	12	3	9
Bronchitis ... ..	11	2	1	..	..	..	8	13
Pneumonia ... ..	14	2	3	1	1	6	1	5
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs	2	..	..	..	..	2	..	..
Alcoholism ... ..	2	..	..	..	..	..	2	1
Cirrhosis of Liver } ... ..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Premature Birth ... ..	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	3
Heart Diseases ... ..	21	..	..	..	..	12	9	19
Accidents ... ..	3	1	..	..	..	1	1	3
Suicides ... ..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
All other causes ... ..	55	10	2	1	2	10	30	45
All causes ... ..	152	22	13	3	4	55	55	143